

2008

# Online Practice Portfolio Grade 12

## 2006 PORTFOLIO SCORING STUDY\*

### KENTUCKY WRITING PORTFOLIO

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#### Grade 12

Student Signature Sheet Included and Signed

Y

N

(Circle One)

Fill In Number Selected	Category/Descriptor	Content area At least <u>one</u> piece must come from a content area other than English/language arts	Page
1	<b>Reflective Writing</b>		
	Title: Dear Reader	English/language arts	1
1	<b>Personal Expressive OR Literary Writing</b> (Include 1) <i>Personal Narrative, Memoir, Personal Essay Story, Poem, Script, Play</i>		
	Title: Strings	English	4
1	<b>Transactive Writing</b> <i>Various Real-World Forms</i>		
	Title: By the Numbers: Affirmative Action in Public Colleges & Universities	Law & Justice	7
1	<b>Transactive Writing with an analytical or technical focus</b> <i>Various Real-World Forms</i>		
	Title: Journeying through <u>The Jungle</u> : An Analysis of the novel by Upton Sinclair	U.S. History	11
4	<b>Total (must equal 4)</b>		

\* Reconfigured - originally contained five pieces.

## STUDENT SIGNATURE SHEET

(Required In Each Portfolio)

Please read the Note to Students and Teachers below before signing the following statements.

### Required Verification Signature

The pieces in this portfolio are my own work. I am the author of all the pieces in my portfolio. I may have talked about my work (conferenced) with my teacher, family, and friends, but I have made any changes and corrections myself. I did my own writing, typing, and/or word processing (unless otherwise indicated by teacher's signature in the box labeled "IEP/504 Plan Adaptations").

Student Signature

G. B. A.

IEP/504 Plan/Program Services Plan (LEP) Adaptations (requires teacher signature):

Teacher Signature

### Optional Permission

I agree to allow my portfolio to be photocopied for use by others outside my school as an example of student work. I understand that my name, the names of my school and town, and any other identifying information I may have used in my writing will be removed before my portfolio is copied.

Student Signature (optional)

G. B. A.

**Required Verification Signature**--It is required that the work contained in each portfolio is the original work of the student. Every portfolio must include the statement, signed by the student, that the work in the portfolio is his/her original work. This sheet must be placed in the portfolio. If the verification statement is not signed, the portfolio will receive a performance rating of Incomplete.

**Optional Permission**--The use of actual student portfolios is critical in teacher training and is essential for quality control checks during statewide re-scoring activities. Students are requested, but are not required, to give permission for this purpose and should sign the second statement above if they agree.

Please note that portfolios are included in any statewide rescoring activities even if neither statement is signed.

Dear Reader,

It was a hot August day when it hit me. I was mowing our enormous front circle, which usually takes about thirty minutes to trim to a level sheet of soft, emerald grass. I look forward to mowing the lawn because it is my reflection time. The drone of the spinning blade and chugging motor tune out the distractions of everything around me. I've made numerous decisions on that lawnmower; I have decided my weekend plans, sorted out some parental issues, and even chosen my homecoming date while doing the weekly chore. All of these resolutions came to me just as this particular one did on that scorching afternoon in August. I had been trying to make sense of a small string of occurrences the night before. As I rounded the mower around the small pin oak in the lawn, right out of left field—no pun intended—it came to me. *I need to write about this.* And so spawned the first child of my portfolio, *Strings*. Ultimately, the collection of pieces you will soon read fell out of the sky, figuratively speaking.

The way in which I produce my writings is unique. Whereas many people will jot down ideas, perhaps make charts and diagrams, I, on the other hand, could be considered lazy. I just wait. Sleep on it, as they say. Because, through experience, I know the next morning in the shower, or the following afternoon on the riding lawnmower, an idea will come to me. My topics, whether they be a speech for a debate or a dramatic monologue for theatre, inspire me just as the falling apple inspired Sir Isaac Newton. In this case, however, once the apple hits my head, I am driven to create masterpieces instead of the laws of gravity.

Perhaps these instantaneous bursts of ingenuity began in my middle school years. As a preteen I was fascinated with Agatha Christie, and in the seventh grade, engrossed

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in the pages of Hercule Poirot and the whodunit plot, it occurred to me. *Why can't I do this?* And so began my first novel, *Murderous Affairs*. I dedicated a whole notebook to the characters, each having two pages with a profile—their relationships, occupations, personalities, and pasts. It was a beautiful novel, a tale drowning in love, jealousy, and deceit. I began to fall in love with my characters Anne Blair, Jonathan Hastings, and Inspector Sheldon Tredway. Unfortunately, after two chapters, I gave up the dream of becoming the next Agatha Christie. Perhaps the project was too large for the spontaneity of its birth to survive.

My habits, however, still remain intact. I have taken advantage of this unique method of beginning a piece. It has taught me to be patient, to avoid stress, and to go with the flow. Each piece in this portfolio was inspired through this approach. As mentioned before, *Strings* hit me while I was reflecting on the actual events that were later crafted into a personal essay. *First Kiss*, a sonnet, came to me piece by piece in my dreams; finally one morning I woke up and put the puzzle together, finally being able to remember the message from my subconscious. My editorial *By the Numbers* was produced from a discussion about affirmative action at the dinner table. *Journeying through The Jungle* wasn't quite as spontaneously inspired, for the topic of the review was specifically assigned to analyze the novel *The Jungle* by Upton Sinclair. However, the title did spark my imagination right before pressing the print button. With a little editing, along with a new title, my unexpected inspiration added a bit of zest to the review. Even this letter's theme of spontaneity came to me out of nowhere; it wasn't until now that I even realized I had been using this method to create all my works!

Now, dear reader, it is your turn. What will instantly come to you after you read these pieces? How will you react? Search for the apple that hit me on the head, the things that inspired me to create these for you. The discoveries will be surprisingly unexpected.

Sincerely,

Expect the Unexpected

## Strings

So many adolescents lose themselves in the chaos of their spinning world. The threads that hold them to morality, the distinction between right and wrong, and basic sanity quickly unravel as they strain for rebellion. Allison's threads were becoming weak.

As we sat on the bouncing bus, its motion due to the battered country road, Allison remained in silence across the aisle. I watched her while she fiddled with her cell phone, and the drone of the crowded bus began to seep into my subconscious. I reflected on the unsurprising news I had just acquired about Allison. She had just given her phone number to a stranger, an older man in his mid-twenties, whom she had spoken to for no more than five minutes in a convenience store. When she returned from the store, my friend, who had accompanied Allison during the stop, informed me of the situation that had just occurred. I waited for the buzzing conversations on the bus from the others to become a constant drone, and knowing that my questioning would be private, I turned toward Allison to find out more.

"Why did you do it?" I inquired, confused by her stupidity.

"Do what?" she absent-mindedly replied, wrapped up in her game of *Snake* on the Nokia screen.

"They said you gave your number to that guy at the counter."

"Yeah. So what?" she said, shrugging off my concern of the matter.

I debated voicing my opinion, wary of her defensive nature, but I couldn't hold myself back. Somehow Allison would have to realize that she made a foolish decision.

"I thought you were smarter than that, Allison. You didn't even know the guy, and he was way too old for you to begin with. Do you realize how dangerous that is?" I waited for her attack.

Finally, she raised her head and faced me. "Well, I've got to have friends to help me make my decisions since I don't have an effin' mother to help me," she retorted.

Amazed by her inexcusable reasoning, I replied, "What kind of excuse is that? Allison, you can make decisions on your own. You don't need others to make them for you!"

"No. I can't," she simply stated, hanging her head.

Dumbfounded at her response, I sat on the now smooth ride trying to comprehend. She was sixteen; wasn't she old enough to have common sense, to distinguish the difference between right and wrong? Could she not think for herself at all?

I sat on the bus in the darkness, and saw nothing but myself, enveloped in an infinite void. Strings connected my heart and my mind; they were firm and tight, woven with the strings of my family and friends. Allison rested beside me, her strings few, mere threads, on the verge of splitting. If only I could have given mine to her, introduced to her the ideals of choice, decisions, and good judgment. I could have woven my rope into her sparse threads. I could have strengthened her.

What had Allison missed to result in her spare threads? What had I gained in my childhood and adolescence that she had lacked?

My upbringing must have differed significantly from Allison's. As a child, my parents developed the ideals of reward with good actions and punishment with bad actions into my youthful mind. Around the age of five my family introduced the "chip system." A counselor had suggested to my mother that this system be used to encourage good behavior, for I was a holy terror in my youth. My parents rewarded me with chips for my good actions, such as cleaning my room, setting the table, and being respectful. In return, however, if I misbehaved or threw temper tantrums, I would lose my chips. I had to "buy" luxuries, such as going over to a friend's house, having a bowl of ice cream, or playing a board game. As the system became a part of my family's everyday life, I began to mature by learning these basic ideals of actions and consequences.

As I grew older, such teachings as the "chip system" grew with me. I chose friends who shared these same principles. We grew close; our strings strengthened and wove as one, along with the strings I had already entwined with my family. Our blanket became weak sometimes; some areas loosened to holes where we had fallen. Yet, through time, patches mended our faults as we learned from our mistakes.

Allison had no bonds, no blanket. Only herself.

We were approaching our destination; the bus slowed to a halt, and everyone slightly jerked as the bus's motion quickly ceased. Allison looked so lost, so breakable. If only she had become a part of my woven blanket years ago. I hoped that her strings would strengthen, transform into thick ropes. Perhaps our small conversation had sparked something inside of her to build her threads. I knew that it had done the same for me—it was not until that night that I realized how strong my strings truly were, and whom I had to thank for it.



## **By the Numbers:** Affirmative Action in Public Colleges and Universities

Since its inception, affirmative action has been a controversial response to the imbalance of races entering public institutions of higher education around the United States. While the theory of affirmative action was to create equal opportunity, its execution in the admissions process has instead ironically produced a reverse discrimination and lessened the equal opportunity for *all* races. Quotas required by federally funded colleges and universities force schools to deny those who have the academic eligibility to attend the institution only because they are not of a minority. By the numbers, racial preferences run wide and deep throughout post-secondary education.

In its tumultuous 40-year history, affirmative action has been both praised and pilloried as an answer to racial inequality. The policy was first introduced by President Lyndon B. Johnson as a method of redressing discrimination that had persisted despite various civil rights laws and constitutional guarantees. Focusing principally on education and jobs, affirmative action policies required that active measures be taken to ensure that blacks and other minorities enjoyed the same opportunities for promotions, salary increases, career advancement, school admissions, scholarships, and financial aid that had been exclusively available to the white majority. From the outset, affirmative action was envisioned as a temporary remedy that would end once there was a "level playing field"

for all Americans. However, the policy's flaws quickly emerged amid its good intentions.

In 2001, the Center for Equal Opportunity (CEO) studied 47 public colleges and universities around the country and their affirmative action programs. The study showed that the vast majority of schools use racial double standards in admissions—a higher one for whites and Asians and a lower one for blacks and Hispanics. The study's authors, Robert Lerner and Althea Nagai, concluded that “racial preferences play a far more important role in admissions than has been previously acknowledged.” These preferences were not minor. For example, at the University of California, median Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) scores varied by more than 300 points between successful white and black applicants. Grade point averages for the two groups differed by more than half a point.

In the study, Lerner and Nagai calculated the ratio of the odds of a black student's admission to the odds of a white student's admission among various public colleges and universities around the United States. Of the 23 institutions examined, fifteen showed large, statistically significant odds ratios favoring black applicants. The relative odds ratio favoring black students over white students with the same grades and test scores at North Carolina State, for example, was 177 to 1. At the University of Michigan the odds ratio was 174 to 1, and at the University of Virginia the ratio was 111 to 1.

According to most public opinion polls, Americans reject such racial preferences, and some states have begun to scale back policies that grant advantage based on race or ethnicity. Voters in Washington, as well as California, have adopted a provision banning preferences in state college admission, employment, and contracting.

Plaintiffs have challenged these racial preferences in court in many states including Texas, Michigan, and Georgia. *Regents v. Bakke* exemplifies just this. Allan Bakke, a white male, had been rejected two consecutive years by the University of California medical school that had accepted less qualified minority applicants—the school had a separate admissions policy for minorities and reserved 16 out of 100 places for minority students. As a result, the U.S. Supreme Court outlawed inflexible quota systems in affirmative action programs.

Although there is a need for diversity among students in colleges and universities, affirmative action is an unjust answer to this necessity. There are many ways to help minorities who may be poorly prepared for college, not least of which is to provide education vouchers so they can attend private or parochial schools if they choose. Targeting minority students during their youth and providing them with quality primary education would also be an alternative to affirmative action. Increased funding for programs such as Head Start would offer quality education to young children of minority or low income at no cost to the family. Offering more advanced placement classes in inner-city high schools and upgrading standards for graduation would close the skills gap between whites and minorities as well.

These unfair constraints among United States colleges and universities must be broken to create a true equal culture. Admissions should be based solely on proficiency and potential, no matter the color of skin. To form a color-blind society, we must adopt color-blind policies. Ending these racial preferences in our post-secondary admissions process is the first step to an equal society.

## Bibliography

LaNoue, George, R. "Affirmative action." World Book 2001. 22 vols. Chicago: World Book Inc., 2001.

Chavez, Linda. "Colleges and Quotas." The Wall Street Journal 22 February 2001, sec. A: 22.

Regents v. Bakke. University of California Regents v. Bakke, 438 U.S. 265. U.S. Supreme Court. 1978. 12 February 2005  
<<http://caselaw.lp.findlaw.com/scripts/getcase.pl?court=US&vol=438&invol=265>>.

## **Journeying through *The Jungle*:** An Analysis of the Novel by Upton Sinclair

The novel *The Jungle* by Upton Sinclair, a muckraker during the early 1900s, involves a close-knit Lithuanian family seeking the American dream. The naïve, trusting family comes to Chicago in pursuit of a successful life; little do they know that the corrupt city of Packingtown will only destroy them. Jurgis, the story's main character, and his family discover soon enough that achieving the life they had been dreaming of would soon become an arduous task, if not an impossible one. The family struggles with disgusting working conditions, cruel deception, constant illness and death, and low morale as the narrative progresses. At face value, *The Jungle* is a novel of a group of unlucky immigrants who hit it hard in the new land of liberty. However, this was not Sinclair's objective. Deep within the text of the pages lie elements of the fierce battle between socialism and capitalism, a prevalent struggle at the time the novel was written.

Sinclair manipulates Jurgis's spirit and the situations in which he and his family are involved in order to weave his cry against capitalism throughout the novel. In the beginning, Jurgis is a flat, stereotypical character. He represents all immigrants that come to the United States; his experiences with prejudice, poverty, and disease are typical of immigrants. His struggles are their struggles. By presenting Jurgis in a sympathetic light, Sinclair enables readers to embrace all immigrants. *The Jungle* reveals

the problems that all immigrants and poor people suffer, and presents socialism as the solution.

Although Jurgis is flat at the start of the novel, the proposal of socialism allows Jurgis to become a more dynamic character as the story develops. He begins as a naïve man, innocent and trusting, but progressively grows wise to the ways of the world as he spends time in the deceitful Packingtown. Before he can accept socialism, he must experience and be victimized by another economic system—capitalism. Jurgis begins to realize that this capitalistic system of which he is enslaved destroys his family. In this way, Jurgis' transformation from a two-dimensional character to a more defined personality is a gradual one, reflecting his steady stray from capitalism and acceptance of socialism.

Jurgis's gradual conversion begins when the seasonal shortage of work reduces his time at Brown and Company meat factory, where he receives fewer hours and, subsequently, less pay. Although he must still report to work at 7:00 a.m., sometimes work does not start until the late afternoon, and men receive wages only for actual hours worked. As a result of this inequity, Jurgis sides with organized labor against Brown's establishment. His passion for the union foreshadows the zeal he develops for socialism. Jurgis will soon embark on a long fight against the unfair practices of management; his life is that of a jungle—the worker ensnared in the fraudulent network of vines of the industry.

Other characters, including Ona and Marija, face the same realization as Jurgis of this corrupt capitalistic society. By using these two characters to serve as a negative example of the value of capitalism, Sinclair is able to promote socialism. Early in the

novel, both characters fall into economic slavery and must turn to prostitution to survive.

Ona and Marija suffer from ridicule and manipulation and are unable to be effective contributors to the family. This is only the beginning of the family's gradual annihilation, a destruction that develops from capitalism.

Besides the characters and their specific personalities and storylines, Sinclair entwines his call for socialism throughout particular situations in *The Jungle*. For example, Ona's deceitful boss, Phil Connor, and his bribery represent all corruption in the industrialized world. Connor's exploitation of Ona serves as a portrayal of how the entire industry works—the bosses manipulate the laborers in a capitalistic world. After Jurgis justifiably attacks Connor in order to defend his wife Ona, Connor then lies in court to protect himself. In result, Jurgis is blacklisted from work as punishment. Through this incident, Sinclair is able to exemplify that capitalism not only adversely affects the workers, but also that its evil infiltrates the seemingly unbiased judicial system.

The final chapters of the novel serve as an intellectual examination into this newfound “religion” of socialism Jurgis has discovered. When Jurgis is converted, Sinclair provides the theology for both the new convert in the book—Jurgis—and the new converts who read the book. The text is very bland and parallels the rhetoric of a typical socialist promoting their economic philosophy. Due to this lecture-like style, the final chapters of *The Jungle* have no real narrative and read more like a thesis.

Sinclair's efforts for promoting socialism proved not to be very successful, for capitalism remained in the United States. However, *The Jungle* did catch attention of the United States government concerning the meatpacking industry, although Sinclair's original intentions were different. In response to the novel, the Pure Food and Drug Act

and Meat Inspection Act were passed to improve meat production. While socialism did not flourish in the following years, *The Jungle* most definitely had a great influence on meat industries throughout the nation.

*The Jungle* is a brilliantly written novel, full of symbols and underlying messages that subconsciously manipulate the reader. This allegory written by Upton Sinclair describes the jungle of the United States and its animal inhabitants. The predators and the prey, the quicksand and the jagged rocks, the entangled vines and the open paths—all represent the corrupt world of capitalism and those that are drowning in it.



## **Bibliography**

LaNoue, George, R. "Affirmative action." World Book 2001. 22 vols. Chicago: World Book Inc., 2001.

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